

# THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Task Force on New Colleges

### **Final Report of the On-site Review of College Education in Six Selected Universities/Colleges in the U.S. and U.K.**

#### **Background**

1. The college system is a unique feature of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Every undergraduate student at CUHK is assigned to a college. The four constituent Colleges of CUHK started with a relatively small student population, at about 450-600 each when they first joined the University or in the case of Shaw College, when it became operational in 1988. Over the past decades, as the University enrolment expanded, the sizes of the four Colleges have also grown. As of September 2005, each College had around 2,500 students, about half of whom reside in College hostels.
2. By 2012, when the undergraduate curriculum is reverted to four years, the enrolment of the four existing Colleges will increase to over 3,200 each, if the college system is to be preserved without the establishment of new colleges. It will certainly be difficult for them to fulfill their role as providers of non-formal education and pastoral care to undergraduate students.
3. After consultation and deliberation, the University, with the formal approval of the University Council, decided as part of its Ten-Year Strategic Plan the creation of one or more new colleges. The Vice-Chancellor appointed a Task Force on New Colleges to conduct an on-site review of the different models of college education in selected overseas universities and colleges, and to make recommendations on the formation, organization, mission and characteristics/features of the new colleges.
4. In January 2006, the Task Force visited Claremont McKenna College, Harvey Mudd College, Princeton University and Yale University in the U.S., and the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford in the U.K. These six institutions represent three different models of organizing college education within a university system.

#### **Consultation**

5. In February 2006, the Task Force submitted to the Vice-Chancellor an on-site review report on its observations, findings and recommendations. The report, available on the University's website (<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/newcolleges>), was widely disseminated to all members of the University on February 16, 2006 with a view to encouraging discussion of its contents and recommendations.
6. The review report generated a great deal of interest and discussion on campus. During the consultation period, the Chairman and members of the Task Force attended 18 seminars, discussion forums and consultation sessions with various parties; about 5,000 students, teachers and alumni attended these meetings to share their views and comments (Annex 1). In addition, the Chairman of the Task Force attended four informal meetings with the Chairmen and Trustees of the four College Boards of

Trustees, as well as a meeting of the Executive Committee of the University Council on March 24, 2006 during which the findings and recommendations of the Task Force were discussed.

7. The consultation ended on March 31, 2006, following a consultation period of one and a half months. The Task Force continued to hold discussions with and receive views from interested parties after that date. A total of 19 written submissions were received from staff, students and alumni (Annex 2).

### **Parameters and Constraints**

8. In making recommendations on the way forward, it is pertinent to bear in mind the following parameters and/or constraints under which CUHK operates:
  - a) There are four existing Colleges, each with about 2,500 students, playing an important role in the general education, informal education, pastoral care and personal development of the students. During the consultation exercise, the Heads of the four existing constituent Colleges clearly stated in their joint submission to the Task Force that their existing facilities would not be able to cope with further and significant increase in student numbers (Annex 3). And most importantly, the four Colleges are not all prepared to increase the size of their student population further in the coming years.
  - b) The constitutional arrangement between the University and its constituent Colleges is governed by the Ordinance and Statutes of CUHK.
  - c) The Hong Kong SAR government has made it clear that it will not provide additional resources for the formation of new colleges. All additional resources must be raised through private donations.
  - d) Within the CUHK campus, no additional land is available for development that is close to the size of any one of the four existing College campuses, and it is impossible to ask the government to grant land for new colleges. Hence establishing a new college that is comparable in size to the existing Colleges is technically not a viable option.

### **Revised Recommendations**

9. With regard to the above parameters/constraints, the common features of the collegiate systems of the universities/colleges we visited as well as the views collected during the consultation period, the Task Force on New Colleges makes the following revised recommendations for consideration by the University Council:

- a) Small and Fully-residential New Colleges

Small size, full residence and communal dining are the essential ingredients for building and fostering an intimate, interactive, congenial and caring community of students and academic staff which is the common objective of all collegiate systems. The University should consider forming new colleges with a small population, say 300-600, of fully resident students. The new

colleges should aim at providing accommodation for all students throughout their years of study. Students who join the new colleges should expect to be in residence throughout their entire undergraduate/graduate programme. Dining is a key element of every residential college. All students living in the new colleges should enrol on college meal plans in the college dining halls, and the new colleges could provide different meal plan options. These small, fully-residential colleges can be seen as an experiment to provide an alternative college experience for students.

b) Medium-sized and Partially-residential New Colleges

The Task Force is however mindful that not all students wish to be in full residence in their colleges and to participate in communal dining. Convenient public transport makes daily commuting preferable to residing in colleges for some students. We are therefore also open to the possibility of forming medium-sized, partially-residential colleges, which are similar to the existing Colleges but much smaller in size with, say 1,200 students.

c) Large and Partially-residential Existing Colleges

To date, each existing College has around 2,500 students, about half of whom are hostel residents. The Vice-Chancellor has stated on several occasions that the University will not impose on the four existing Colleges to raise their student numbers. After taking care of the expected 3,000 additional students, he will assist existing Colleges which do not take in more students to raise funds for more hostels, if these Colleges so desire. The aim is to raise the residential ratio. The Task Force adopts an open stance towards the “optimum size” of existing Colleges as it believes this is an issue that should be left to the deliberation and decision of the Colleges. It recommends the University to consider proposals, if any, from the existing Colleges to raise or reduce their student numbers on the condition that such a proposed change should further enhance the quality of college experience for students.

d) Number of New Colleges

The Task Force envisions that besides the four larger existing constituent Colleges, a combination of one or two small, fully-residential college(s) and one or two medium-sized, partially-residential college(s) will need to be established before 2012 to accommodate the extra cohort of students, subject to the number of extra students that the existing Colleges are prepared to absorb in the coming years and the number of students they may wish to relinquish, if any.

e) Objectives, Mission and Vision of New Colleges

The common objectives of all colleges are to foster an intimate and personal community of students and teachers with mutual learning and intellectual sharing, to provide pastoral care and whole-person education for students, and to create an environment for learning and congenial college life. On top of this, each college can have its own mission and features.

The mission and vision of a new college will be a guide for development and a focus of identity when it is established. So long as the new college's mission contributes to the education and welfare of its students, and is consistent with the educational mission of CUHK, there is no need to insist on any particular orientation. However, it is imperative to spell out the educational objectives and mission of each new college from the outset. This will greatly facilitate the solicitation of support from benefactors who share these educational ideals.

The spirit and character of a new college will however take time to evolve as the college grows and flourishes, and will be shaped by its members, including students, faculty, staff, College Head, and eventually alumni.

f) University's Funding Allocation to Colleges

The current mechanism of allocating block grant support to colleges should remain unchanged and hence the University funding allocation to the existing Colleges will not be reduced as a result of the founding of new colleges. Any funds contributed by donors specifically to colleges will continue to be earmarked exclusively for the benefit of those colleges.

g) Student Mix of New Colleges

Each new college should admit mainly undergraduate students (including non-local and exchange students) but may admit some postgraduate students.

h) Library and Sports Facilities

Setting up a small library with a limited collection in each new college is definitely not cost-effective and will fail to meet the diverse academic needs of all students of a college. Given land constraints and with a view to maximizing the use of university facilities for cost-effectiveness, new colleges will only provide reading/study rooms and limited indoor sports facilities. Gymnasias, outdoor sports and library facilities will be provided centrally by the University.

i) Residence of College Head

The College Head of a fully-residential college should live in the college and be completely integrated into college life. The Task Force highly recommends that for new, fully-residential colleges, the Head's residence should be constructed within the college premises with private donations.

10. The following recommendations do not require the approval of the Council. They are for the consideration by the planning committees of the new colleges and the relevant committees of the University.

a) Endowment Fund

A new college should establish its own endowment fund through donations to

support its programmes of education, scholarship and bursary, to enhance its academic, cultural and physical facilities, to appoint teaching staff for small group teaching, and to sustain its financial aid programme to ensure that every student who is admitted to the college can reside in the college regardless of his or her financial circumstances.

b) Small Group Teaching and Learning

Since Faculties and Departments tend to emphasize specialized teaching and lectures, the mission of the new colleges should be the provision of general education through small class teaching and learning, such as seminars and tutorials.

c) Fellows

The new colleges should invite senior academics of the University from various disciplines to be college fellows. It would also be desirable for the University to encourage in their appointment letters new academic staff and senior non-teaching staff to participate in all aspects of college life and contribute to their College. The College Head should be appointed as the chairman of the nomination committee of Fellows.

d) Student Participation

i) *College Committees*

Students are an integral part of a college and their participation in college committees on academic affairs and student life should be welcome. Student activities should be organized mainly through student initiatives.

ii) *Honour Code*

It is desirable for the new colleges, in conjunction with their students, to adopt a honour code, i.e. a set of guidelines/regulations governing college life that define what constitutes honourable behaviour within a college. The honour code should be created and administered by students, not imposed by the colleges.

iii) *Survey on College Life*

It is important to ask whether a college meets the goals it has set for itself. To answer this question, systematic studies of the feedback of its students (and eventually alumni) in the form of periodic surveys are recommended.

e) College Fee

Membership of the new colleges may entail a modest college fee (on top of hostel and meal plan fees) to help defray the cost of social, recreational and cultural programmes. For students with financial needs, bursaries will be provided to ensure that students who wish to apply to the new colleges will not

be discouraged for financial reasons. However, during the consultation period, there was a concern that such a fee might create division among colleges and result in disunity. The Task Force recommends that the new college planning committees, in consultation with the Informal Advisory Group to the Vice-Chancellor on University-College Cooperation and Collaboration (re: paragraph 11), should further study the feasibility and desirability of collecting a college fee.

f) Bursaries

Bursaries should be provided for students with financial needs to help defray the additional cost of living in the new colleges throughout their entire programme of studies, including hostel fees and meal plans. Again they will be financed by private donations.

g) Facilities

i) *Residence Hall*

The architectural design of the residence halls of the new colleges must be appealing and common areas must be generous to make the new colleges attractive options at CUHK, notwithstanding the much smaller size of their campuses.

ii) *Dining Hall*

Each fully-residential new college should have its own dining hall. There should be adjacent smaller dining areas for private dining of Fellows and students and for holding dinner talks by guest speakers.

iii) *Seminar, Tutorial and Small Group Study Rooms*

Each new college should have a few seminar, tutorial and small group study rooms for conducting small-group teaching and learning in the college.

iv) *Public Meeting and Recreational Activity Space*

A mix of public meeting and recreational activity space should be spread throughout the new colleges. This includes quiet study space, computer rooms, small lounges, student society offices, a central common room adjacent to the dining room, a TV room, multi-purpose meeting and practice space, a music practice room, a café and a small theatre for films, plays, seminars and group discussions.

### **University-College Cooperation and Collaboration**

11. During the consultation period, members of the University raised concerns on issues that may arise from differences between the new and existing Colleges, such as how to maintain a balance of students from different departments in small colleges, how small colleges can participate in inter-collegiate events, competition in fund-raising and student recruitment, and the feasibility of levying a college fee. The Task Force

recognizes that these are valid concerns but they are beyond its purview. It notes that the Vice-Chancellor has recently appointed an Informal Advisory Group to the Vice-Chancellor on University-College Cooperation and Collaboration which comprises Heads of the four existing Colleges and, potentially, the would-be Heads of the new colleges to study these issues.

### **Student Representation on the New College Planning Committees**

12. Implementation falls outside the terms of reference of the Task Force, and will be taken up by the new college planning committees. During the consultation process, some students strongly expressed the demand for student representation in the new college planning committees, a demand which the Task Force agrees to bring to the Council for consideration. Students are the core members of a college. The Task Force supports the view that the University should continue to collect views from members of the University during the planning process, and at appropriate intervals, report on the progress.

### **Way Forward**

13. The Task Force believes that our recommendations will lay down the framework for providing, through the establishment of new colleges, a meaningful college experience for the additional 3,000 students who will join CUHK in 2012. As the student body grows, these recommendations should assist the University in preserving small intimate communities of students and academic staff, and enhancing the pastoral care, attention, guidance and inter-personal interaction which are the *raison d'être* of our unique collegiate system in Hong Kong.

April 20, 2006

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

**Task Force on New Colleges**

**Consultation Forums/Meetings**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Briefings, Seminars, Forums and Consultation Sessions</b>	<b>No. of Attendees</b>
1.	February 17, 2006	College Assembly, United College	1,327
2.	February 17, 2006	Meeting of the Assembly of Fellows, Shaw College	34
3.	February 24, 2006	United College Annual Workshop	159
4.	March 3, 2006	College Assembly, Shaw College (Student Union Forum)	1,310
5.	March 4, 2006	Meeting of the Assembly of Fellows, Chung Chi College	40
6.	March 5, 2006	Alumni Homecoming – Welcoming Session	485
7.	March 8, 2006	Vice-Chancellor’s Meeting with Students (New Asia College)	100
8.	March 9, 2006	Meeting with Fellows of United College	18
9.	March 10, 2006	College Assembly, New Asia College	860
10.	March 10, 2006	Meeting with the representatives of the Representative Council of the CUHK Students Union, Student Senate Member-elect, and Members-elect of the Executive Committees of the CUHK Students Union and College Students Unions	11
11.	March 17, 2006	College Assembly, Chung Chi College	500
12.	March 17, 2006	Open Forum	25
13.	March 18, 2006	Alumni Consultation Meeting	45
14.	March 21, 2006	Meeting with Fellows and staff members of New Asia College	17
15.	April 1, 2006	Meeting with members of the alumni association of New Asia College	8
16.	April 3, 2006	Meeting with members of the alumni association of Chung Chi College	6
17.	April 6, 2006	Meeting with members of the alumni association of United College	8
18.	April 8, 2006	Meeting with members of the alumni association of Shaw College	7

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

**Task Force on New Colleges**

**List of Written Submissions**

- | <b>Ref.</b> | <b>Name</b> |
|-------------|-------------|
|-------------|-------------|
- A. Staff
1. Heads of Chung Chi College, New Asia College, United College and Shaw College
  2. Professor Larry Baum, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine and Therapeutics
  3. Professor David Kember, Professor of Learning Enhancement, Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research
  4. Professor Lau Kwok-keung, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration and Policy (1975/NA/PHI)
  5. Mr. Lo Yuen-cheong, Director, Physical Education Unit
- B. Students / Student Bodies
6. Lau Chun-keung (*Taught Master's Programme*)
  7. Li Kin-sum (*NA/Translation*)
  8. Wong Yu-ka, Gary (*Education*)
  9. CUHK Students Union, Students Union of Chung Chi College and Students Union of United College
- C. Alumni
10. Joyce Chung (*1992/NA/BBA*)
  11. Ho Chun-kit (*1998/CC/SOC*)
  12. Lam Hung-fee (*1997/PD/PED*)
  13. Patrick K. Lee (*1993/UC/BBA*)
  14. Lee Wing-ka, Patrick (*1996/SC/PHY, 2002/GS/COM*)
  15. Wan Ho-yan (*1978/NA/FIN*)
  16. Joseph K.P. Wong (*1980/UC/BCH, 1984/GS/MBA*)
  17. Wong Tang-fong, Frank (*1965/CC/PHY*)
  18. Y.T. Wong (*1993/UC/BBA*)
  19. Wyman Wun (*1966/CC/PHY*)



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Our Ref :

3 March 2006

Your Ref :

Professor Liu Pak Wai  
Chairman  
Task Force on New Colleges  
c/o Pro-Vice-Chancellor's Office

Dear Professor Liu

We are happy to support the University's initiative to set up more Colleges. The reasons are as follows: (1) The current student population in each of our Colleges has already reached a saturating level. As the University will keep on expanding and admit more local, non-local and exchange students in the coming years, the existing facilities in each College will not be able to cope with further and significant increase in student number. (2) We agree in principle to the University's goal that the new College(s) will provide an intimate learning and living environment, and offer quality whole-person education for our students.

Irrespective of the mode of operation which will be adopted by the fifth College and other new Colleges, we shall be pleased to work closely with these new Colleges for the ultimate benefit of students.

Yours sincerely,

Y.S. Leung  
Head  
Chung Chi College

N.C. Wong  
Head  
New Asia College

K.P. Fung  
Head  
United College

P.C. Ching  
Head  
Shaw College